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ABSTRACT

Pressure on universities to reexamine their educational administration preparation programs has prompted reconsideration of reflective methods. The application of cognitive science to administrative problems as well as philosophical debates found in the literature have also led to this reconsideration. John Dewey's views on reflective methods have much to offer this discussion. Dewey referred to his general philosophical position as "instrumentalism" (as opposed to "pragmatism") in that it was the study of thought as an instrumentality in inquiry. This theory of inquiry, often equated with scientific method, is the centerpiece of Dewey's work. Dewey saw human behavior as relatively automatic, with habit and impulse playing major roles. When habit and impulse are blocked, however, activity becomes disorganized and problematic. Inquiry begins with the recognition of the problematic. Alternative actions can be tried out in thought; this process is what Dewey called reflection. Dewey's theories on inquiry extend to ethics and values as well. He asserts that social ills result from separating morals from common problems of living. In social philosophy, Dewey asserts that reflective methods and growth have practical use as well. These views are prominent in Dewey's concept of democracy and social processes. Although research is presently limited, it is believed that future investigation of decision making in educational administration will demonstrate the usefulness of reflective methods. Internalization of reflective thinking is crucial to its effective use in educational administration and requires institutional support. (Contains 36 references.) (JPT)

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DEWEY'S THEORY OF INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

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DEWEY'S THEORY OF INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Reflective methods have long intrigued students of educational administration, but they have not been objects of continuing and substantive attention in the field. Recently, a renewal of interest seems to have been sparked by several influences. A general one is the increasing pressure on university programs to reexamine and further justify the kind of preparation they provide. One response has been to use reflective practice as an integrative theme and desired program outcome (e.g., Hart, Sorensen, & Naylor, 1992; Short & Rinehart, 1991). A related influence has been the effort to apply cognitive science to the problems of administrative practice where the compatibility of situated cognition theory and reflective methods has been underscored (Prestine & LeGrande, 1991). A third is found in the philosophical debates that have enlivened the literature. There, pragmatism, with its emphasis on inquiry and reflection, has emerged as a significant contender (Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Willower, 1992b).

John Dewey is the premier philosophic source on reflective methods. Indeed, his work has been a fountainhead for an array of epigones and other commentators on the topic, including those usually cited in educational administration (e.g., Schon, 1983, 1987). Dewey's notion of reflection is embedded in his larger philosophy, especially in his theory of inquiry, his approach to ethics, and his conception of social values.

The exploration of Dewey's thought and its implications has much to offer current work on reflective methods in educational administration. It can provide philosophic grounding and a context through which practice and preparation can be seen more holistically as part of a broader intellectual, social, and ethical framework. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to review some of the main themes of Dewey's philosophy and draw implications for a variety of issues in educational administration, but especially reflective administration.

Dewey's Philosophy

Obviously, Dewey's philosophical views will have to be examined selectively and briefly. In this, it helps that the various components of his philosophy are integrated with his conception

of inquiry, which lies at the heart of his approach. In what follows, that conception, which encompasses Dewey's notions of science and knowledge, is discussed, followed by an examination of his ethics and social philosophy. Then implications for educational administration are considered.

First, however, a few general comments. While students of educational administration are usually most familiar with Dewey's work on education, that work went far beyond educational philosophy. It spanned most of the philosophical areas and issues of his time, many of which are still with us, although the language of the day is sometimes different.

While Dewey's general position is often called pragmatism, it is necessary to be cautious about labels. Pragmatism, as a broad philosophic view, is quite varied. It is a philosophical system that is suspicious of systems, and unlike phenomenology and Marxism, each of which had a single founder who left a defining corpus of work, pragmatism was developed in the writings of Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead (For comparisons see Rockmore, Colbert, Gavin, & Blakeley, 1981). Dewey points out in the preface of one of his major works, Logic. The Theory of Inquiry, that he has avoided the use of the word pragmatism because it lends itself to misconceptions, although he describes his work as "pragmatic" given the proper interpretation of that term (1938, pp. iii-iv). He sometimes referred to his own approach as instrumentalism, in the sense that it was the study of thought as an instrumentality in inquiry. Contemporary versions of pragmatism still rely heavily on Dewey's ideas, which have remained remarkably relevant. These versions range from philosophical perspectives such as Rorty's (1979) neo-pragmatism to social science ones like pragmatic sociology (Baldwin, 1990). In addition, there is a continuing fascination with Dewey's thought in education (e.g., Burnett, 1988; Robertson, 1992) and his ideas are debated in an array of other fields, to give just one example, planning theory (Hoch, 1984). To be sure, Dewey's views are rarely swallowed whole. Rorty, for instance, is less an empiricist and more relativistic than Dewey and pragmatist influences in the social sciences stem from Mead and James as well as Dewey. In any case, Dewey saw all views including his own as subject to change, based on the processes of inquiry, to which we now turn.

Inquiry

It is worth repeating that Dewey's theory of inquiry is the centerpiece of his philosophy, shaping his conceptions of science, knowledge, values, practice, and society. While the theory of inquiry can become more complex in its applications to a few areas such as formal logic, in the main it is quite straightforward. Often equated with scientific method, such an equation is not in error, provided one has an open, fluid, relaxed notion of scientific method.

Dewey sees much of human behavior as relatively automatic with impulse and habit playing major roles. However, when habit and impulse are blocked, activity lacks direction and becomes disorganized and problematic. Inquiry begins with the recognition of the problematic, which can become more unified and organized through the formulation and carrying out of new activity. Alternatives for action appear and can be tried out in thought. This thinking through of possible courses of action is what Dewey calls deliberation or reflection (1922; 1938). Possible courses of action are in a sense hypotheses that are to be assessed reflectively for their likely consequences, both short and long range. Once a preference has been selected and has directed action, it can be evaluated in terms of its actual consequences, that is, of how well it worked to resolve the initial problematic situation. Intelligent thought or reflection is thus an instrumentality that can make the problematic more determinate. Yet, problem resolution leads to altered conditions and new problems requiring new reflection and appraisal. "There is no such thing as a final settlement because every settlement introduces the conditions of some degree of a new unsettling" (1938, p. 35). Chosen courses of action remain experiments in problem resolution since what worked in the past can be altered by further inquiry. Absolutes and fixed choices close off the possibility of reflection and experiment. In Dewey, the methods of inquiry themselves are subject to change and improvement. They are progressive and self-rectifying.

Science is inquiry that gives special attention to operations of description and interpretation, but scientific knowledge is not fundamentally different from everyday knowledge. In the broad sense of natural, social sciences are branches of natural science, although less developed. Social inquiry is harmed by "failure to translate influential conceptions into formulated

propositions" (1938, p. 508). Instead, ideas are formed on the basis of custom or special interests and a result is "dichotomization of a social field into conservatives and progressives, 'reactionaries' and 'radicals'. . ." (p. 508). Genuine inquiry requires that social ideas be treated as hypotheses to be tested, not as truths or dogmas.

For Dewey, "scientific methods simply exhibit free intelligence operating in the best manner available at a given time. . ." (1938, p. 535). An occasional negative result is not necessarily fatal in science since "inquiry. . .can only arrive at conclusions having. . .some order of probability" (p. 390). The outcome of inquiry is knowledge or in Dewey's terms, warranted assertibility. Warranting occurs because of logical plausibility and the preponderance of evidence and is always temporary. "In scientific inquiry, the criterion of what is taken. . .to be knowledge, is being so settled that it is available as a resource in further inquiry. . ." (p. 9), but it is never settled in such a way as not to be subject to further inquiry. The Deweyan conception of science thus stressed the qualities of tentativeness and self-correction. Even though results can be cumulative and understanding greatly increased with ongoing inquiry, regnant ideas can always be replaced by new, better warranted ones.

In his treatment of inquiry, Dewey fully recognized the significance of the emotional and impulsive. Indeed, he emphasized the biological and psychological bases of behavior, while maintaining that it was the mediation of reflection that allowed emotional life to attain its fullest potential. The notion of inquiry was pervasive for Dewey and is the key to his views on ethics, considered next.

Ethics

In the previous section, I began the discussion of inquiry with reference to the effort to address a problem through the reflective consideration of alternative actions and their likely consequences. The problem could have been personal, the kind individuals face everyday; it could have been a scientific one with an investigator attempting to puzzle out an explanation for certain observations; it could have been a school problem that an administrator was confronting.

In Dewey, there is no area off limits to inquiry, including ethics and values. Indeed, the separation of morals from the common problems of living in favor of an abstract creed or ritual creates social ills. Abstraction can be the enemy of morality (1922, pp. 324-330). The location of morality in everyday life means, for instance, that what students of educational administration call practice is chiefly an ethical undertaking, that is, a matter of the reflective appraisal of the values served by various decision options. Just as ethics must be lived, reflection is the process that gives them life, and Dewey equates reflection and inquiry. "It would have been possible. . .to use the term 'reflective thought' where the word inquiry has been used" (1938, p. 21). Deliberation is also sometimes used in the same way (1922, pp. 189-209). In any case, whether the term employed is inquiry, reflection, deliberation, or even intelligence or scientific method, the process involves problem formulation, the elaboration of alternative solutions and their consequences, and the use of available ideas and evidence to make a reasonable choice.

This kind of ethical theory stands in sharp contrast to those that insist upon absolute values and imposed standards of morality. "The difference between customary and reflective morality is precisely that definite precepts, rules, definitive injunctions and prohibitions issue from the former, while they cannot proceed from the latter" (Dewey & Tufts, 1932, p. 175). For Dewey, a moral problem is like other problems, the right thing to do has to be reasoned out and the specifics of the issue at hand cannot be ignored.

Since ethics for Dewey are naturalistic, empirical, and anti-transcendental, he grounds his view in the human condition. Most behavior is automatic and habitual; reflection is unnecessary and would be out of place. For Dewey, a human being is an interrelated and interacting body of interests or desires. However, "the fact that something is desired. . .raises the question of its desirability" (1929b, p. 260). While desire is mechanical and immediate, desirability is a function of the mediation of thought and reflection. For the individual, this can lead to an integration of desires based on their quality and longer range considerations, resulting in fuller, richer experience.

In Dewey, reflective methods are seen in the context of emotion and impulse, not as separated from them. If reflection is to play a part in moral choice in everyday affairs, it has to be internalized as habit. Put differently, it should be a natural, almost automatic response. Dewey states that character is "the name given to the working interaction of habits. . ." (1922, p. 40). A person who has been able to internalize reflective methods, who has a well developed sense of human possibilities and of alternatives that might achieve them, would presumably be someone of good character, but even good character cannot guarantee desirable results because of the problematic connection between intentions and outcomes.

A frequent criticism of Dewey's ethical theory is that it is circular in the sense that moral principles must be judged by their consequences, but the consequences cannot be judged as good or bad, better or worse unless a standard for judging is assumed beforehand (Hook, 1950). Dewey would answer this objection by pointing out that knowledge of values like other knowledge is cumulative. Over time certain principles gain credibility because they prove useful in the solution of moral problems. Such principles can serve as standards to direct moral inquiry but they cannot be final or fixed (Dewey & Tufts, 1932, p. 230). Put another way, a variety of qualities such as health, industry, justice, kindness, friendship, adventure, and honesty can guide moral choice, but in the context of a particular problem, they can conflict so that reflective judgments about consequences and possible outcomes must be made.

My study of Dewey suggests that there are two major philosophical goods in his ethics, although given his opposition to every sort of fixed end, he would probably object to that way of putting it. These goods are growth and reflection. Dewey contended that the rejection of definitive ends and principles has consequences: "Moral life is protected from falling into formalism and rigid repetition. It is rendered flexible, vital, growing" (1948, p. 175) and ". . .the process of growth, improvement, and progress, rather than the static outcome. . .becomes the significant thing" (1948, p. 177). Even stronger statements were, "It is in the quality of becoming that virtue resides. We set up this and that end to be reached, but the end is growth itself" (Dewey & Tufts, 1932, p. 340), and "Growth itself is the only moral 'end'." (Dewey, 1948, p. 175).

By growth Dewey means the expansion and fullness of experience. It is a growth ". . .in shades and scopes of meaning" (1922, p. 280), an expansiveness in living. Growth is concerned with the present. "Progress means increase of present meanings, which involves multiplication of sensed distinctions as well as harmony, unification" (p. 283). And growth has a crucial social dimension both in terms of variety and intimacy of connections with others and the promotion of their growth (pp. 293-294). Growth is education in the broad sense and "morals means growth of conduct in meaning" (p. 280).

Reflection is a good because it is a process that creates growth and is an aspect of growth. Reflection not only enables us to reconstruct the problematic into the determinate, but also to reconstruct the problematic so as to produce an outcome with breadth of meaning, richness, and growth. Reflection is a singular means to growth since it is itself a mark of educative progress and of maturity. Internalized as habit, it is what makes us "reasonable creatures" (1922, p. 247), for reason is not a pregiven force, it is an outcome, an openness to reflection.

If growth and reflection are goods, or to put it in a more Deweyan, if more awkward way, if they are betters, how can they be attained? Dewey asserts that changing unthinking habit in the direction of reflective habit is not a matter of attempting to change habit directly, but of changing the social, environmental surroundings that effect habits. He sees a need to "remake social conditions so that they will almost automatically support fuller and more enduring values and will reduce those social habits which favor. . .impulse unordered by thought, or make men satisfied to fall into mere routine and convention" (p. 247). This brings us to Dewey's social philosophy.

Social Philosophy

Reflective methods and growth are as central to Dewey's social philosophy as they are to his ethics. He points out that while we have become used to experimental methods in physical and technical matters, as far as human and social behavior are concerned, activities are still conducted on a non-scientific basis (1927, p. 169). He believes it urgent that reflective methods

and the scientific attitude be brought to bear on social problems, especially in light of the increased complexity of modern, industrial society.

Growth, the other central concept in Dewey's ethical theory, is also crucial for social values. On this level, growth is the realization of individual potentialities through the construction of a society that will enable its members to fulfill their capacities in free and varied activity. Dewey equates democracy with this kind of a society. If democracy has a moral meaning, he avers that ". . .it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society" (1948, p. 186).

However, with technological advance, the issues facing contemporary society have become so broad and intricate that individuals find themselves in the grip of forces over which they have little or no control. The public lacks identity and focus (Dewey, 1927). Society lacks community. Community "adds the function of communication in which emotions and ideas are shaped as well as joint undertakings engaged in" (1939, p. 159). Community and communication are essential for democracy, because the sharing of ideas is the only way an individual can participate in directing collective activities.

Communication in a democracy requires reflective intelligence and education. This means free social inquiry and the distribution of its results. However, the task is not an easy one, for "the prime condition of a democratically organized public is a kind of knowledge and insight which does not yet exist" (1927, p. 166). For progress to occur, knowledge must be as systematic, thorough, and contemporaneous as possible and its presentation must have a direct popular appeal. Hence, presentation must become an art: "The freeing of the artist in literary presentation. . .is as much a precondition of the desirable creation of adequate opinion on public matters as is the freeing of social inquiry" (p. 183). According to Dewey, democracy will have its consummation ". . .when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication" (p. 184).

Dewey's conception of democracy is thus dependent on wide and informed participation in the democratic process. He is clearly negative about government by experts, because intellectuals can become a class with private interests and private knowledge, removed from the common interest (1927, pp. 205-206). And he rejects Marxism partly because it isolates economic factors from their broader context, but mainly because it is presented as a set of prior beliefs taken to be true rather than as tentative ideas open to testing and critical appraisal (1939, esp. pp. 75-90).

Indeed, dogmatism of every kind is antithetical to Dewey's notion of inquiry. For him, ". . . the future of democracy is allied with spread of the scientific attitude" (1939, p. 148). The scientific attitude includes a willingness to put personal conclusions aside, hold belief in suspense until evidence is obtained and then go where the evidence points, the ability to use ideas as hypotheses to be tested rather than as dogmas to be asserted, and the enjoyment of inquiry and of new problems (p. 145). There is an affinity between science and democracy since ". . .freedom of inquiry, toleration of diverse views, freedom of communication, the distribution of what is found out to every individual as the ultimate intellectual consumer, are involved in the democratic as in the scientific method" (p. 102).

An essential social need, however, is the "improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. That is the problem of the public" (1927, p. 208). The problem has many facets. It is an educative one. The schools' function for democracy will be a hit or miss affair until the scientific attitude pervades education (1939, pp. 149-150). It is an economic one. Great wealth gives its holders power over the various means of communication.

It is possible that changes in industrial capitalism could reduce influence of the latter kind. Change could occur through science and invention that would make the bounties of technology more readily and more cheaply available to all, through legislation that could alter the conditions under which business is conducted, and through education in the direction of reflective thought and intellectual enjoyments. Such changes could "create an industrial order in which the present exaggeration of profit and gain would be enormously reduced" (1929a, p. 743).

Dewey's unequivocal rejection of Marxism does not mean that he endorses capitalism, if by that term is meant an unrestricted profit motive. He points out that greater profit can often be made by manipulating supply, and advertising can be used to create new wants where none previously existed. Furthermore, poorer quality goods often bring higher profit and natural resources can be wasted by those for whom the exhaustion of resources is profitable (Dewey & Tufts, 1932, pp. 449-457). Dewey leans toward some sort of economic regulation for the good of the whole society. However, he rejects the notion of the equal distribution of goods because it fails to give sufficient weight to individual differences in ability and willingness to do a fair share of work (pp. 454-457), and he contends that free individuals would rather take their chances "in an open world than be guaranteed in a closed world" (1922, p. 311).

Thus, Dewey is concerned with the societal and political effects of an unrestricted profit motive and large discrepancies of wealth. However, he distrusts intellectuals, experts, and doctrinaire social planning, and is uncomfortable with entitlements that could restrict activity, initiative, and growth. He argues that social welfare cannot consist of what he calls a soup kitchen happiness. Conditions must be fostered that widen horizons and give people command of their own powers to find happiness in their own way. Otherwise, the prayer of the free individual "would be to be left alone and to be delivered, above all, from 'reformers' and 'kind' people" (1922, p. 294).

This combination of social criticism and skepticism concerning social planning and programs has long been remarked as a distinctive feature of Dewey's social philosophy (e.g., McGill, 1950). It stems from his emphasis on reflection and growth and his view that science, let alone social planning, is contingent and uncertain. Plans and programs can only function as hypotheses, but solutions to social problems are more likely to come out of the exercise of reflective methods than from the application of fixed beliefs and pregiven doctrines.

Dewey recognizes that just as reflective methods must be internalized by individuals if they are to have genuine import, they also need to be institutionalized in the various arenas of social activity. But this would not be easy since "the general adoption of the scientific

attitude. . . would mean nothing less than a revolutionary change in morals, religion, politics and industry" (1930, p. 155). However, progress in the direction of more reflective individuals and social institutions is not something that is abstractly attained or not attained. For Dewey, "the challenge to make the world more reasonable is one that is ever renewed, since it is a challenge to execute concrete operations at definite places and times" (1938, p. 532).

Dewey's social philosophy has been criticized from both more conservative and more radical perspectives. For instance, it is seen, on the one hand, as a threat to an array of cherished beliefs accepted on the basis of authority or tradition and, on the other, as an apology for the status quo. However, it should be noted that many of Dewey's critics of the right and the left tend to approach problems with pregiven solutions. Because both inquiry and democracy are based on the critical examination of proposed solutions, they are threats to such approaches.

Although Dewey sets great store by reflective methods and democratic processes, there is little question that history, both past and near, suggests that other and sometimes darker forces play a very great role in human affairs. At the same time, inquiry and democracy appear to work better than their alternatives. This gives them an empirical grounding of sorts, however uncommon they may be in actual practice. It also means that inquiry remains the procedure of choice and democracy the governmental arrangement of choice. They make sense, they work, they are, in Deweyan terms, desirable.

Even though it fully recognizes the fallibility of human beings and their methods, Dewey's philosophy is an optimistic one. Inquiry, after all, provides procedures that can show some theories and value choices are better than others, which means that its habitual use in concrete situations is a key to improved social conditions. Indeed, Dewey maintains that the cultural consequences in the form of distortion, confusion, and waste that result from failure to use the methods of inquiry, are incalculable (1938, p. 535).

Implications

I dwelt on Dewey's philosophy because I wanted to give a substantive account of it as he presented it. Cliches about his thought and simplistic associations of Dewey with this or that program are common, not least in educational circles, so it seemed important to emphasize his core ideas. Given the sheer volume of his written work, my treatment was truly selective and brief and, of course, it was based on my reading of Dewey. Nevertheless, I believe it adequately captures the essentials.

In exploring implications of Dewey's views for educational administration, I will focus mainly on reflective methods in the context of the school organization and secondarily on aspects of the recent philosophic debates in the field.

Reflective Administration in Schools

Although reflective methods are sometimes featured in textbooks on educational administration (e.g., Sergiovanni, 1987), they do not appear to be very widespread among administrators nor, for that matter, in most other social endeavors. At the same time, we do not know a lot about the processes of reaction and thought that underlie administrative decisions. It is possible that what appear to be snap judgments are the result of relatively complex administrator responses. For example, Simon (1979, 1987) suggested that expert-novice research supports a pattern recognition hypothesis, which proposes that what experts do rapidly with the appearance of intuition is grounded in the recognition of situational patterns and cues that generate inferences and decision. Such work is full of potential, but it is obviously in its infancy. That it could provide a lifetime of scholarship for bright young researchers in educational administration goes without saying.

In any case, the studies that have been done of decisionmaking in educational administration ranging from the classic in-basket research of Hemphill, Griffiths, and Fredericksen (1962) to the more recent work of Leithwood and Stager (1989) often support the utility of reflective procedures in terms of outcome measures or as a feature of expert choice processes. Another strand of writing has correctly emphasized the obvious, that administrative

decisions usually mirror an array of motives, interests, and justifications rather than strictly reflective procedures. Occasionally the complaint has been made that rational (critics seem to prefer this term to reflective) processes ignore values and are amoral. This seems off the mark since such processes seek to weigh alternatives and consequences, which is to say, competing values. However, such complaints have sometimes been a source of confusion partly because they are more oriented to the field's philosophical debates than to the study of decision processes.

Generally, then, the empirical literature on decisionmaking, never very extensive in educational administration, has been favorable to reflective methods when they have been studied, but clear on the prevalence of other approaches. Moving from Dewey's treatment of inquiry to the practical question of how to make the work of school administration more reflective requires an examination of the processes of internalization and institutionalization.

Internalization

Dewey emphasized that most human behavior was properly based in habit and impulse, but that problematic situations required the mediation of thought and reflection, which in turn should become habitual. Given the biological and psychological make up of human beings, Dewey saw how crucial it was that the use of reflective methods be natural, virtually automatic and something that could engender commitment, emotion, and even passion. He also understood that their internalization depended on facilitative and supportive social arrangements. Thus, internalization and institutionalization are symbiotic.

How reflective methods can be taught and learned is an obvious concern, one that is central to administrator preparation. Clearly, this concern is one that can be addressed by careful reviews of past research and through new empirical studies which should be undertaken using the best information and theory available in psychology and education. Such work ought to be a matter of high priority. However, I will restrict my comments on internalization to the

importance of reflective methods for moral choice in administration and the utility of social science concepts and theories in grounding moral choice.

Dewey has convincingly shown that the proper subject matter of ethics is the concrete problem. It makes little sense to place ethics in a niche that limits or ritualizes practical applications and separates morality from its human and existential context. In administration, non-routine decisions usually require judgments about competing values. Making such judgments is a major and continuing aspect of administration, whether the decisions themselves are unilateral or collaborative. Reflective methods can be crucial to ethical choice in such decisionmaking, especially in complex cases or when the choice between courses of action is a close call. The elaboration of alternatives, their probable consequences, and ways of dealing with those consequences are at the heart of the matter. Surprisingly, the competing values themselves may not be a difficult issue: There is often agreement on what constitutes goods or evils and on the maximization of the former and elimination of the latter. The substantive issue is implementation.

For instance, in the case of a teacher with a long-term personal problem that appears to be affecting classroom performance, desirable outcomes involve both the welfare of the students as learners and as people and the welfare of the teacher as a professional and as a person. Sensitive administrators would prefer to maximize both, but must depend on hypothetical determinations of the likely results of alternative courses of action in making a wise choice. These determinations should be grounded to the extent possible in what is known about human behavior, that is, in the use of social and psychological concepts and theories, and special attention should be given to probable consequences including the mitigation of negative ones. In the case cited, the latter would involve efforts to foresee and ameliorate potential harmful effects on student learning should the teacher remain in the classroom while the personal problem was addressed or to reduce the career and personal difficulties that could result from the teacher's leaving the classroom.

The application of reflective methods with an emphasis on consequence analysis can be used to facilitate all kinds of administrative choices. It puts morality in administrative life on a concrete basis and makes it relevant to real problems rather than an exercise in rhetoric. Consequence analysis as briefly described here and illustrated more elaborately elsewhere (Willower, 1964) has been successfully used in projects designed to improve school problem solving (Licata, 1978).

A key point is that reflective methods depend not only on a clear picture of the facts of the case, but also on the use of ideas to guide searches for relevant information, alternatives and consequences, and ultimately, wise choices. Make no mistake about it, one's arsenal of ideas is enormously enhanced by the use of social science concepts and explanations. Indeed, few have been more self-defeating than the science bashers in educational administration and other fields who, proclaiming commitment to values, wish to detach moral choices from the great facilitator of their actual attainment, namely their empirical grounding. Put differently, if values are to be realized, knowledge about how people and organizations behave, used reflectively, can make all the difference.

Efforts to move organizations in the direction of desirable aims such as the growth (in the Deweyan sense) of participating individuals will always be complex and difficult and, for the involved administrator, an uncertain and precarious adventure. But it will be a less risky adventure if that administrator has a sensitive grasp of the sociology, politics, and psychology of the particular setting. Good intentions are important. They help, but as Dewey pointed out, they are not in themselves sufficient.

In this connection, it might be useful to reexamine Dewey's notion of character which, it will be recalled, was seen as a working interaction of habits. From that perspective, a desirable character would incorporate a scientific attitude--curiosity, the treatment of ideas as hypotheses and courses of action as experiments--and an awareness of the potentials of others and a commitment to their fulfillment. If such a notion of character could be developed and sorted out theoretically from related concepts, it might have special utility as one way of spurring the

empirical study of reflective and ethical tendencies in educational administration. Beyond research on how reflective methods can be taught, investigations are needed of the extent to which their habitual use can be described or measured and whether feasible ways of predicting "character" of the kind Dewey envisioned can be developed. An additional question is how the use of reflective methods plays out in terms of outcomes in school organizations. Attention should also be given to the place of competing values in reflective methods and the extent to which reflective administrators are, in G. H. Mead's term, also reflexive, that is, self-aware and self-critical. Paraphrasing the Socratic dictum, do they know themselves?

Institutionalization

Context is central to internalization. Without organizational support, individual administrators who habitually employ reflective methods seem likely to come to grief. Such methods, after all, pose a threat to fixed and favorite beliefs and will likely not take hold in groups or organizations without a widespread openness to communication and to the critical assessment of ideas, including those dear to one's heart. Hence, the importance of institutionalization, not only to help individuals become more reflective, but as a way of legitimating and making critical appraisal routine, part and parcel of everyday organizational life.

Institutionalized reflective methods should lead to better and more ethical organizational decisions since the various sides of problems and the consequences of alternative solutions for different groups and individuals will be aired. A major benefit from the administrative point of view is that decisions that have been subject to reflective assessment are usually easy to defend. Having survived critical analysis, they ordinarily represent reasonable courses of action that can be explained to anyone who may object. Another is that consequence analysis can help administrators head off or soften negative aspects of decisions and avoid the situation where the solution to one problem creates new, possibly more serious problems. Still another is that reflective processes shift attention from who to blame when things go wrong to why they go

wrong, a salutary outcome in organizations where hierarchy often spawns defensiveness, feigned deference, and commitments to self-serving choices rather than to moral ones.

In considering institutionalization, it is well to keep Dewey's conception of reflective methods in mind. They are not a technology to be imposed. Nor are they a particular set of solutions for the ills of the organization and its members. They are not a panacea nor even a sure thing. They simply represent intelligence in action: a scientific attitude and open-mindedness along with a respect for evidence and experience.

For reflective methods to become institutionalized, organizational arrangements, beliefs, and practices need to be geared toward them. This means they should be reflected in the norms, values, symbols, and shared meanings that characterize the organization and its participants, as well as in various structures and procedures. To be less abstract, the attitudes and values of individuals in the organization would be consistent with such comments as: "We try to think of ways to improve things around here"; "If something doesn't work, we change it"; "We're not afraid to criticize ideas"; "We look at all sides of a problem and try to do the right thing"; "We like to figure out ahead of time what will happen if we change something."

The procedures and routines of more formal groups such as administrative cabinets, school councils, advisory committees and others can employ a wide array of devices from the use of a devil's advocate to "What can go wrong?" sessions to more elaborate consequence analysis (Willower, 1992b). Since honest and critical discussions of problems are anything but typical of organizations, a crucial administrative task is to create conditions that will allow them to occur authentically and, eventually, naturally and routinely.

In educational organizations, reflective methods should imbue teaching and learning. Such methods have long influenced teacher preparation and the notion of critical thinking or learning how to think is a commonly sought student outcome (Levine, 1992). However, the gap between ideal and reality is typically very great. Role overload among teachers and administrators, the likelihood that adult and student groups in schools will have different and even conflicting values, and community pressures for strong discipline and simplistic answers all

contribute to that gap. Hence, it is an administrative task to convince members of the organization that reflective processes are real and not ritualistic. And it is an additional task to ensure that, once accepted, they do not in time become ritualistic.

It is also well to be clear about the limitations of reflective methods. As a tool devised by humans, they fall heir to the shortcomings of the species. Obviously, there are inherent dangers in overanalysis and in seeing reflective methods as ends instead of means, what Dewey called the vices of reflection (1922, pp. 197-198). Deciding which problems deserve extended reflective analysis is itself a problem. Patently, a great deal of decisionmaking in organizations has to be left to individual discretion at various levels of the organization. Numerous decisions are not really controversial or complex. Clearly, issues related to moral choice, future possibilities and directions, and those that impact upon the welfare of people call for reflective analysis, while others may be judgment calls. In any event, the use of reflective methods should not be a rigid or mechanistic exercise. In this, a scientific attitude, but one that is relaxed and leavened by good humor, and experience should be useful guides.

Finally, it is essential to understand that reflective analysis can go wrong. The saving grace here is that the method is self-corrective. Still, in organizational life, a few visible failures can have serious negative consequences, if realistic expectations have not been established beforehand. It will help if reflective methods are seen as a useful and flexible tool rather than as some sort of final solution. After all, organizational and educational history is replete with such solutions, now remembered, if at all, as passing fads. In Dewey, reflective methods are conceived as grounded in curiosity, possibility and adventure as well as in thoughtful empirical assessment. Their use should add zest and robustness to administrative and organizational life at the same time that it enhances the likelihood of attaining desirable aims.

The Societal Context

It is a truism that schools mirror society. They are societally controlled and it is expected that they will teach the young the dominant values of the community. In a western democracy such as the United States, this would ordinarily include values such as tolerance, honesty,

cooperation, responsibility, willingness to work hard, and respect for the rights of the individual. An overarching concern is the importance of education. For Jefferson and other founding fathers, an educated citizenry was essential to successful democratic governance. For Dewey, the centerpiece of education was reflective methods which define the processes that lead to ethical political choice.

Dewey saw education as a vehicle that would enlighten and inform participation in the democratic process and in a range of community endeavors. The schools would teach reflective methods and thus produce individuals capable of evaluating the claims and counterclaims put forward in the political arena, eventually arriving at reasonable decisions. Dewey understood and decried the corrupting influence that great wealth could have on the political process and governance. While he emphasized the importance of presentation, he likely did not foresee the extent to which presentation would become an art form in the hands of well paid publicists and "spin doctors" in an era of enormously expanded mass media, especially television. This combination of monied political interests and televised presentation is obviously a serious threat to intelligent democratic choice.

Where, in all of this, do the schools fit? It seems more essential than ever that they pursue the goal of preparing an educated citizenry by teaching students how to think for themselves, a goal whose attainment will be abetted when the decision processes used by the adult members of the school organization are also informed by reflective methods. However, critical thinking is sure to ruffle some community feathers since it could call into question beliefs that are strongly held by particular individuals or groups. In such cases, the administrator's duty to defend free inquiry seems quite clear. At the same time, it is reflective processes that the schools should teach and protect, not particular conclusions or ideological positions. Both science and democracy are built on such processes, which help those who employ them to make their own inferences and reach their own conclusions. No views should be arbitrarily imposed, let alone those of public school administrators. As citizens, administrators may choose to hold

opinions anywhere on the political spectrum, but as administrators and educators, they empower others by teaching the methods of reflection, not by promoting their own beliefs.

Dewey's social philosophy underscores the importance of education to democracy. Among social institutions, society's educational organizations stand out as legitimate agencies of enlightenment. The schools, at their best, can teach the reflective processes essential to intelligent and ethical political choice. However, Dewey's philosophy offers little to special interest groups who hope to advance particular programs. Unless, of course, those programs can be translated into concrete propositions and proposals that can withstand the critical scrutiny of reflective analysis.

Philosophic Debates

Much of the philosophical debate in educational administration has revolved around science and values (Willower, 1992a). Disputes in educational administration mirrored those that had already occurred in the social sciences and like them, featured subjectivist and neo-Marxist attacks on what each group called positivistic science (for a review in sociology, see Smelser, 1988). One criticism of positivism was that it ignored values. While this was emphasized by subjectivists and neo-Marxists in educational administration, there was little substantive discussion of valuation or of competing approaches to ethics.

The point to be made here is that Dewey's conceptions of science and knowledge were quite different from those of positivist, or as many preferred to be called, logical empiricist thinkers. Deweyan science was more experience-centered and more human, closer to the way inquiry was actually conducted. To give just one example, Dewey did not see a single disconfirming instance as sufficient for the falsification of a theory. It raised doubts, to be sure, but given the fallibility of science and scientists, a single test rarely settled anything and nothing was ever settled in a final way. Dewey's open, flexible notions of science and his definition of truth as warranted assertibility are more difficult to attack than traditional positivism, which has not been a noteworthy contender in philosophy proper for many years, and which has been

something of a straw man in the recent controversies in the social sciences and educational administration.

On values, the stark contrast between Dewey's concrete and careful approach to moral choice and the lack of attention to the specifics among those in educational administration who tout the importance of values while rejecting science, is instructive. Traditionally, in ethics, subjectivists prefer idealistic, sometimes transcendentalist approaches and Marxists see their political agenda as a moral platform. However, in educational administration, subjectivism and critical theory, the prevalent version of neo-Marxism, have been largely expressed in the form of criticisms of science and of the lack of attention to values, rather than as philosophical positions on values.

The Deweyan view is not given to sweeping assertions, but is more likely to explore pros and cons. One such assertion, made by some subjectivists and critical theorists, is that science can have little or no objectivity because it is affected by political biases and processes. Most writers in the pragmatist camp would accept the premise that bias and politics are part of the human condition and could seriously erode scientific objectivity. However, most would also argue that inquiry is a process in which merely personal and political factors are discounted and eliminated. Put differently, scientific communities develop standards for the assessment of scholarship. These are human creations that can change with experience, but they do provide grounds for the evaluation of theories and research (see Willower, 1992a).

In any case, the pragmatist perspective as represented in Deweyan thought represents a severe challenge to subjectivists and critical theorists in educational administration, one they have not sufficiently acknowledged so far. Part of the problem is that the debates seldom have been real debates in Dewey's sense of presentation and critical examination that richen and facilitate communication and appraisal. As is often the case with debates, protagonists make their points, downplay the weakness in their positions and speak mainly to their supporters and those they hope to convert.

Some of the values issues being discussed in the current literature deal with equity. This writing is usually but not always independent of subjectivism and critical theory. It deals mainly with ethnicity, class, race, and gender. Sometimes contemporary scholars have attempted to divine how an earlier thinker would stand on current issues of this kind. Robertson's (1992) efforts to do this in her examination of Dewey's thought was one of the weaker elements in an otherwise lucid essay. Whether one can generalize, for instance, from Dewey's supportive comments on a woman reformer to agreement with items of a feminist agenda, appears to be a futile exercise.

The surest thing that can be said is that Dewey would apply reflective methods and his concept of growth to every social problem including those concerned with equity. Beyond that, he would surely champion any group that was truly oppressed, but like most philosophers, his treatment of morality and justice is expressed in terms of the individual, an all inclusive and easily defended category. This helps to avoid the ethical pitfalls associated with the preferment of a particular group, as for instance a master race, and those arising from the enormous within group diversity that is typical of collectivities. At the same time, Dewey's emphasis on the growth and fulfillment of each individual within the framework of an educative, democratic society offers compelling grounds for equity, without the clannish commitments and xenophobic appeals that too often mar contemporary arguments in behalf of particular groups.

An additional point, especially relevant at a time in which cultural identities are accentuated and sometimes even created, is that the dark side of culture lies in its demands for conformity. Conformity is the enemy of reflective methods and of cultural criticism and improvement. The Deweyan community is, after all, one that cultivates and cherishes reflective methods. On this view, some cultures are better than others. For instance, those that are more open and educative are preferable to those that are more closed and rigid in requiring adherence to pregiven beliefs. Dewey's thought is a healthy counterpoint to the popular, but seldom questioned dogmas of the day. In this, there can be no exemptions for intellectuals, for as

Dewey pointed out, these "experts" can suffer from a special kind of tunnel vision, today sometimes rationalized as commitment.

Concluding Comments

I have tried to present John Dewey's version of pragmatism in some detail and to draw implications for reflective administration and for some of the philosophical concerns being discussed in educational administration. Dewey's theory of inquiry emerges as a compelling alternative to the now virtually extinct scientistic positivism of the past, as well as to the relativism of subjectivism and the censorious ideology of critical theory. Deweyan science emphasizes the creative, human, and fallible but self-corrective aspects of that enterprise. It fits what actually happens in scientific inquiry and provides a rationale for the enduring practical empiricism that has continued to guide those who do research in the social sciences (Smelser, 1988) and educational administration (Culbertson, 1988), whatever their philosophical predilections or lack of them.

Dewey's conception of reflective methods is especially useful in connection with ethics. For administrators, reflective processes can help to frame decisions which represent choices from among competing values. Such processes attend to the specific and concrete, the subject matter of everyday administrative life. They require that the likely consequences of administrator vision or ideals be critically explored, not just accepted and not allowed to function merely as verbal justification unconnected to organizational activities. Reflective methods can guide administrator behavior and administrator preparation (Willower, 1983). They epitomize thoughtful administrative practice, the praxis of the ancient Greeks, and they facilitate ethical practice.

However, a nagging and obvious question remains. It asks about the feasibility of reflective methods. Was Dewey too optimistic? Is it reasonable to expect that reflective methods will take hold to a significant degree among individuals, organizations, or societies? It is not difficult to paint a bleak and negative picture in this regard. Yet, preoccupied as we are by Dewey's focus on explicitly reflective processes, it is not clear how widespread is the use of less

explicit, but still reflective processes, a kind of reflective satisficing to use Herbert Simon's term. Furthermore, Dewey was quite clear about the difficulties of internalizing and institutionalizing reflective methods. Still, he saw them as desirable and philosophically justified. To use them was to participate in the struggle to live thoughtfully, a struggle that would be ongoing and never ending. Dewey did not present reflective methods as a cure-all, just as a way of doing better. Their use by individuals, in organizations, and in larger collectivities is more a challenge than a prediction.

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